

Curve flattens in the county

City extends mask mandate after debate

KENDRICK CALFEE
News Editor | @calfee_kc

About 15 minutes after City Manager Greg McDanel pulled up a graph from the Nodaway County COVID-19 dashboard, the Maryville city council, in a 3-2 vote, passed an extension of the local face covering ordinance through Nov. 24.

The graph showed when cases spiked in Nodaway County, with indicators on a timeline when the mask ordinance was originally enacted in July, and when students arrived at Northwest Missouri State University. Councilman Tye Parsons first moved to extend the mandate through Dec. 31, 2020, but councilman Matt Johnson countered with an amendment to the motion, including the Nov. 24 date.

City councilor Jason McDowell and Mayor Ben Lipeic voted no on the amended motion after discussion with the mayor and council that heavily revolved around waiting on more data before making a decision.

“We still have another meeting between now and the time (the mandate) expires,” McDowell said. “What’s the harm in waiting for two more weeks for data and then discussing it at the next meeting?”

Parsons responded to McDowell’s question by citing the Nodaway County Dashboard data, explaining that shortly after the face covering ordinance went into place, local positive COVID-19 cases per day were trending down, until move in day for Northwest.

“We all anticipated the spike,” Parsons said. “The great thing that I see in this data is that we are now trending back the right way. I think you have to say that the masks have had an impact on that trend back down.”

Councilwoman Rachael Martin, who attended the meeting via a video chat platform, agreed with Parsons and asked what two more weeks of data would show compared to data as of the week of Sept. 14.

When making decisions like this for the city, McDanel said council and staff continue to seek advice from its partners: the Nodaway County Health Department, Mosaic Medical Center - Maryville and Northwest Missouri State University on mitigation matters.

The NCHD said in an email to city staff that it believes the face covering ordinance has been an effective mitigation strategy to date and that it aligns with statewide and national recommendations. The email to city staff also said the NCHD supports an extension in the face covering ordinance.

Northwest also supported an extension of the ordinance, requiring the wearing of face coverings in public spaces. In an email to city staff, a University official said they acknowledge the importance of keeping in-person classes going is crucial to the local economy.

SEE CITY | A4



RACHEL ADAMSON | NW MISSOURIAN
The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services and the National Guard held a drive-thru COVID-19 testing event Sept. 14 at the Maryville Community Center. The event had the capacity to test 400 people.

As cases spike in state, county turns a corner

ANDREW WEGLEY
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Nearly a full month after in-person and hybrid classes restarted on Northwest’s campus, COVID-19 cases are spiking in counties across Missouri, with average daily case totals increasing by nearly 16% this week statewide.

Several counties in the northwest corner of the state have been labeled as hot spots on the New York Times’ interactive state map, while some college counties like Boone County, where the University of Missouri sits, have seen intense increases over the last seven days.

Meanwhile, Nodaway County — which was designated a national COVID-19 hot spot just weeks ago — has seen its seven-day rolling average of positive cases drop

from a peak of 29.71 to 5.86 over the last two weeks, as much of Missouri deals with a continued surge.

“All the ingredients were there for us to move up the charts, you know, for us to go right to the top,” said Tom Patterson, the Nodaway County Health Department administrator who fielded calls from the New York Times just last week as the county navigated its way through the worst of the pandemic locally.

Patterson said he was surprised to see the county receive national attention as a COVID-19 hot spot, even as he feared the worst was yet to come.

As roughly 7,000 Northwest students converged on and settled in Maryville at the start of the fall semester, Nodaway County averaged between 15 and 30 new cases every day from Aug. 24 to Sept. 6. Patterson thought the numbers might compound, with 30 daily case totals turning into 60 — a phenomenon that never happened. The county’s highest single-day total to date is 46 cases.

In the height of the pandemic in the county, much of the surge in new COVID-19 cases came from students and staff at Northwest,

where there were close to 200 active cases Aug. 31 as Northwest President John Janski warned students that in-person classes might be suspended if mitigation efforts weren’t followed.

0.22%

of Northwest students are isolated with the coronavirus as of Sept. 14

The influx of college students was one of the key factors Patterson described as an “ingredient” that seemed destined to catapult the county further into the pandemic’s grasp, with patients in the 10-29 age range making up more than 72% of the total cases in Nodaway County since April. At the start of September, nearly 70% of the county’s active cases involved Northwest students or staff members.

SEE COVID-19 | A4

Sorority recruitment pushed almost entirely online

SIDNEY LOWRY
Missourian Reporter | @TheMissourian

Northwest’s Panhellenic recruitment week will be primarily virtual for the first time Sept. 16 through Sept. 21, with the exception of Bid Day as a socially distanced event.

The informational events are taking place over Zoom throughout the week in small Gamma Chi groups, consisting of multiple potential new members and their recruitment counselors who will attend the meeting along with them.

“Our role during recruitment week is to be a guide for the new members,” recruitment counselor junior Bailee Urban said. “Virtual recruitment is a scary new thing for everyone, but I am there to support them and find their new home during the process.”

Recruitment is starting off Sept. 16 with a virtual showcase attended by the smaller groups. This Zoom meeting will include a rundown on all of the events for the week and making sure all new members are able to access the technology necessary for the remainder of the week.

Virtual open houses are set to take place

Sept. 17 and 18. During the first day of open houses, new members will break into their virtual groups to watch welcome videos and be introduced to all of the chapters they are potentially able to join.

Day 2 of open house sessions will have a more personal touch, where potential members will attend virtual parties to learn more about the chapters, while the chapter members get to know recruits. During this meeting, the groups will attend virtual parties for all five chapters on campus.

After finding out more about the organizations, there is a virtual philanthropy round Sept. 19. New members will attend up to four chapters to find out more in-depth financial information as well as their chapter on a national level.

On Sept. 20, new members will narrow down their choices with the preference round. They will attend two chapters and learn about the organization’s values and rituals while chapter members make their final decisions for the next day.

SEE SORORITY | A4



HAILEY HOWARD | TOWER YEARBOOK
Alpha Sigma Alpha member Debrille Merrill awaits new members at bid day in September 2019. This year’s bid day will be at Bearcat Stadium to allow for social distancing.

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Addressing ongoing race issues



Alex and Angela Bryant give a presentation to students and community members Sept. 13 in the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts on race and race issues. The Bryants gave advice on how to combat race issues, such as doing research and keeping communication open.



Students attended the presentation by Alex and Angela Bryant called “Let’s Start Again” Sept. 13 at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts Center.

Guest lecturers say dialogue, civility combats racism best

ABBEY HUGO
Copy Editor | @abbey_hugo

The Northwest Office of Diversity and Inclusion partnered with The Bridge to host three presentations from guest lecturers Alex and Angela Bryant, co-authors of “Let’s Start Again: A Biracial Couple’s View on Race, Racial Ignorance, and Racial Insensitivity,” at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts Sept. 13.

The couple has been married 25 years and preaches civility and discussion as the means to combat racism. After the Bryants spoke at The Bridge in July, Rev. Chad Mayne reached out to Maryville City Manager Greg McDanel and Northwest Associate Provost of Diversity and Inclusion Justin Mallett about having the pair come back to address the city and University.

“We here in Maryville, as we begin to have more conversations related to race and issues of race

and make Maryville, as a community, more inclusive, I think hearing living experiences and hearing stories like Alex and Angela’s is going to be very, very important for our development,” Mallett said while introducing the Bryants to the audience.

The first lecture was held exclusively for city and campus officials and police officers. Mayne said there were multiple city councilmen, department heads and police officers present. The next two lectures, at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m., were for students and community members.

Junior Adrianna Holmes said it was unlike any racial discussion she had ever been a part of.

“It was an overall inclusive message,” Holmes said. “Rather than being targeting, which I feel sometimes topics about race can be, it was very, ‘We need to solve this together. It’s nobody’s fault, but we are all responsible for fixing it.’”

Alex Bryant began speaking his message on racial unrest with a video back in 2016, after several unarmed Black men across the country were killed by police officers and then several police officers were killed in Dallas as retribution.

He shared the video during their presentation, which consists of him holding up a series of cards as his family slowly gathers around him. The cards displayed statements like “It’s Dark vs Light not Black vs White” and “We are all Americans.”

“There are two sides. It’s not black vs. white though; it’s not the people vs. police. It is darkness vs. light,” Angela Bryant said later in the presentation. “If we start to acknowledge people for who they are as individual people and realize it’s not an easy fight to fight, but it’s a one at a time situation, ... we really can make a difference as we do that.”

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Yanks leaves fellow workers with a smile

ABIGAIL STARR
News Reporter | @abbeystarr

After 13 years serving as a cashier on Northwest’s Campus Dining staff, Donna Yanks said goodbye for now and hello to retirement. Her coworkers celebrated her departure Sept. 12 with a surprise party.

Yanks is a woman rarely left speechless, according to her coworkers. She’s never short on opinions, questions or jokes. She connects with everyone around her, making a room smile when she walks into it. When she entered an office filled with balloons, cake and people who love her, all she could do was smile. She sat in a chair next to the cake, listening to the kind words of her friends, laughing and telling stories.

“She’s still in the game,” Teresa Begley said. “She’s still connecting with students, and she’s genuine. I haven’t worked with her long, but I know she’s down to earth.”

Begley works with catering at Northwest. She, like many of Yanks’ other friends, will miss her voice around the J.W. Jones Student Union long after her last day.

“I like giving Donna a hard time, but she does it to me too,” chef Mike Hunt said. “I’m going to miss her bugging me every Wednesday.”

Hunt has worked alongside

Yanks in the Union for years, and their families have known each other for the last 30 years. Every Wednesday, Yanks asks Hunt what day it is. Hunt knows it’s Wednesday, but he won’t say it. He knows she’s only asking because she loves the camel in the Geico commercials so much she has her own stuffed camel named Dobby. Yanks will ask until she hears “hump day.”

“I’ve seen Mike’s brother marry, have kids. I worked with Mike’s brother Roger, so they can’t seem to get away from me,” Yanks said.

Yanks has relationships with the rest of her dining staff, and she said they’re like family. The group gifted Yanks a card signed by the staff along with a succulent plant in a dinosaur planter.

“This office has done everything for me,” Yanks said. “I especially want to thank the payroll office and Spencer (Martin) for letting me hang around.”

Assistant Food Service Director Tyler Detherhee wonders if anyone will fill Donna’s shoes.

“Her connection to the students makes her special,” Detherhee said.

Senior Food Service Director Spencer Martin agrees, saying her honesty is valued by the department.

“We’ll be trying something out



EMILY LLOYD | NW MISSOURIAN
Donna Yanks, Northwest’s longtime helper in the cafeteria reads the card from her co-workers at her retirement party on her last day at the job Sept. 11. Donna has worked for campus dining at Northwest the past 12 years.

and I know I can go to Donna and get her honest thoughts on how something works,” Martin said.

In an email, Northwest President John Jasinski thanked Yanks for her dedication to the University.

“Northwest has been lucky to have such a wonderful example and Bearcat supporter in Donna Yanks,” Jasinski said.

When Yanks heard Jasinski’s words, she was elated. Yanks and Jasinski have a relationship beyond work, talking often as friends. Jasinski hand-picked flowers from his garden to give to Yanks as a gift on her last day. Their friendship has lasted through changes no one could have predicted.

“These masks are the biggest difference. I like working in my own space, and it’s hard to do now,” Yanks said. She often took her mask off to speak, struggling to breathe. Despite all the big changes, Yanks said it was her body that made her retire.

“My legs and my back just hurt,” Yanks said. “I still have fun, but it’s just time. I can’t do it like I used to.”

As she reflected on her time at Northwest, Yanks said she feels grateful for the people she’s met, even those who didn’t get along with her.

“In my time I’ve only met one girl that didn’t like me,” Yanks said. “I can get along with anyone and

you can get along with any of the students here.”

Yanks is looking forward to her days being up to her. She’s heard one of her former employers of 12 years is looking to hire.

“I love Northwest and I’m sad to leave,” Yanks said. “I’ll probably have to find a part-time job to keep me young.”

Until then, she plans to visit her Bearcat family, making sure they stay afloat without her. As she left, she gave long hugs and last-minute laughs.

“I make this place special,” Yanks said. “But these people are wonderful, I’ll miss them everyday.”

Northwest taking steps toward campus equity

ABIGAIL STARR
News Reporter | @abbey_starr5

Since June, Northwest President John Jasinski and the Provost’s Office have been working with faculty, alumni and students to create a plan of action to break down barriers for Black students. Northwest released its plan on Sept. 3 in a microsite with several changes to be made in the coming months.

Based on conversations with the Bearcat community, the University has decided to add a resource center, provide a platform to validate black student experiences, and share an annual progress report with the community.

The report will detail changes on campus and to the department of Diversity and Inclusion.

“I think it’s very important to understand that the entity of higher education across the country is embedded in systemic racism and institutional bias,” Justin Mallett, associate provost for diversity and inclusion said. “The concept of high-



EMILY LLOYD | NW MISSOURIAN
Zerryn Gines, a Northwest senior, reads a book from the University’s diversity and inclusion collection in the B.D. Owens Library Sept. 12.

er education was not built for underrepresented students.”

Mallett, along with the rest of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, had to work to identify key indicators of barriers for minority students locally at Northwest; these include community acceptance, aca-

demic preparation and affordability.

Mallett said removing these hurdles aids in the overall retention of Black students.

Northwest alumni Karen Daniel helped to remove these barriers. Daniel gave a gift of \$1 million to the University, forming her

legacy fund.

The gift will be dispersed across three key areas. One is to provide additional training for faculty and students beyond this academic year. Scholarships for Black students will also be funded with the donation, and a resource center is being developed on campus for Black students and peers.

Through this center, black students will have access to tutoring, financial literacy training and Free Application for Federal Student Aid assistance.

Senior Zerryn Gines has spoken with leaders like Mallett and Jasinski regarding his experiences as a Black student at Northwest. He said he is eager to see such a unique addition to the campus.

“This is something not a lot of campuses have,” Gines said. “I hope there’s more opportunity for Black students specifically to make up for things we haven’t felt comfortable to do before.”

Gines would like to see more

opportunities come out of the resource center, like mentorships or networking opportunities.

A new way to report acts against underrepresented students is the Bearcat Equity Reporting Form now on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion webpage. The goal of the form is to prevent complaints from being washed away in a sea of other Title VI issues involving race, sexuality and gender.

Mallett encourages inquiries to be as detailed as possible. Students should include names, physical descriptions, locations, dates and times, even photos if possible.

“We’ve never had a mechanism in place where students can address these issues. A lot of times those complaints didn’t rise to the level necessary,” Mallett said. “Now we have a central hub where instances of bias can be reported whether it’s on campus or in the community.”

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CRIME LOG
for the week of Sept. 17

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Sept. 12
There was a closed investigation for a liquor law violation at Hudson and Perrin Halls.

There was a closed investigation for a liquor law violation at Perrin Hall.

Sept. 11
There was a closed investigation for property damage.

Sept. 10
There was a closed investigation for four liquor law violations at Perrin Hall.

There was a closed investigation for three liquor law violations at Dieterich Hall.

Sept. 9
There is an open investigation for stealing at Roberta Hall.

Maryville Department
of Public Safety

Sept. 7
A summons was issued to **Brandon M. Riley**, 21, for not having a valid driver's license, failure to register a motor vehicle and failure to maintain financial responsibility on the 900 block of South Buchanan Street.

Sept. 4
A summons was issued to **Hagen D. Snow**, 24, for urinating in public on the 300 block of North Market Street.

SORORITY
CONTINUED FROM A1

The final day of recruitment, Bid Day, Sept. 21, is going to be a socially distanced, in-person event at Bearcat Stadium to allow enough space for new members and chapters to meet. Broken apart into their seven small Gamma Chi groups, every participating member will receive their organization invitations. After that, recruits will break apart and gather with their new chapters, located across the arena.

While the virtual schedule is worked out, some potential new members are worried about the switch to online and what the outcome of the week will look like for them.

"I am looking forward to meeting new girls, since I am a transfer student and don't know many," sophomore Emma Bishop said. "I'm mainly concerned that my conversations won't be as personable online."

Bishop also said this might change the outcome of what chapter she ends up joining.

Despite the few concerns of a virtual week, Assistant Director of Greek Life Megan DeShon, who helped finalize and broadcast the online events, and Gamma Chi recruitment counselors are optimistic the new members will be excited for the in-person Bid Day.

Those wanting to take part in the recruitment week are still able to sign up until 6 p.m. Sept. 16 for a fee of \$35 on the recruitment website.



Councilman Matt Johnson (right) was one of three members of Maryville's city council to successfully vote to extend the mask ordinance through Nov. 24.

CITY
CONTINUED FROM A1

Mosaic expressed support for the extension, citing its experience with growing hospitalizations before the local mandate was enacted.

The health system took in more patients with COVID-19 symptoms in the "north of Kansas City area," meaning its St. Joseph, Missouri and Maryville locations. Hospital capacities have been reduced in these areas, according to a statement Parsons read at the council meeting.

"Now is not the time to let up on mitigation efforts for COVID-19," the Mosaic statement read.

Even with such guidance, the discussion of extending the mask ordinance took close to 15 minutes, where the council discussed the opportunity to wait for more current data when the ordinance is set to expire.

Johnson said he supports the extension because Northwest students are the primary reason for the local spike.

"At some point, personal re-

sponsibility has to step in," Johnson said. "The most problematic age group — 18 to 22 year olds — there's gonna be a huge sound with them leaving. I think keeping what we have in place until (Nov. 24) makes more sense than Dec. 31."

Before the council voted to approve an extension to the ordinance, McDowell said he thought the city should wait to make a decision until the 400 tests from the Sept. 14 free COVID-19 drive-thru testing event data is reported.

"I would guess between now and our next meeting we would have data from those tests, and it would be a very telling piece as well," McDowell said. "We see even by this chart, two weeks can make a big difference either way."

Not content with the majority decision, Lipeic and McDowell both said they are not discounting the positive outcome of the ordinance, but rather wanted more data before approving an extension to what is already in place.

McDaniel noted the mayor and council can amend, extend or terminate the ordinance at any time.

At the same agenda packed city council meeting, council swiftly transitioned from extending the face covering mandate to approving an ordinance that created a downtown overlay district.

The overlay is a formal term for a measure designed to create unity among storefronts and commercial buildings downtown.

Regulations are designed to provide the overlay district with guidelines for developments and redevelopments going forward. McDaniel said some regulations can be challenging but others offer flexibility for business owners in the area.

McDaniel also said the Missouri Main Street Report and planning agencies identified the downtown courthouse square as unique.

"What's unique about that is the wonderful courthouse and the way it's orientated, but you also can't get to downtown without looking at the backs of buildings," McDaniel said.

Regulation categories include but are not limited to: parking specifications, lighting, buildings using similar height, scale and ma-

terials, facade and canopy designs and storefront materials.

"The ordinance is pedestrian oriented," McDaniel said in this briefing for the council.

The council passed this measure unanimously.

At the end of the meeting, in the city manager's report, McDaniel talked about the ongoing issue of city water issues with odor and taste.

Jan. 13, council approved for a new water treatment plant membrane. The \$1.8 million membranes arrival to the city was delayed due to production and shipping issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

City staff has now scheduled installation of the membranes for the week of Sept. 14, a process McDaniel said should take approximately 3 weeks, at which time the new membranes are expected to be operational.

Maryville city council called for a special meeting 5:15 p.m. Sept. 17 where they will discuss the fiscal year 2021 city budget, and is scheduled for another annual meeting in two weeks.

COVID-19
CONTINUED FROM A1

But now, after nearly a full month of classes, Patterson said the University and county seem to have a hold on the virus. The active case count at the University is down to 15, making up 14.42% of the county's current cases. With 11 active cases among the student population, less than 0.22% of Northwest students are isolated with the coronavirus as of Sept. 14 — the latest available data at the time of publication.

"It really was dependent on student behavior," said Mark Hornickel, Northwest's communication manager who has been designated as the spokesman for the University's COVID-19 response. "Again, we anticipated the spike. I think Dr. J's message was just to ... reiterate the expectation for students, that, 'Hey, if you want to be in class and

you want to be on ground this fall with us — employees do too — we need everybody to follow the mitigation measures.'"

Even after Jasinski's email, which served as a warning shot to students after the University of North Carolina and Michigan State each sent their students home, both Hornickel and Patterson said they aren't surprised that in-person classes have continued on Northwest's campus.

Hornickel, repeating a sentiment expressed by University, city and county health officials since mid-August, said Northwest and its partners in the county expected to see a spike in COVID-19 cases when students returned but were confident in the mitigation efforts put in place, including the local mask ordinance, which was just extended through the end of Northwest's in-person semester.

And Patterson, the leader of

the health department that's been worn down by the pandemic as much as any government agency in the county, said he thought cases on Northwest's campus would have had to compound for more extreme mitigation efforts — like suspending in-person classes — to have been enacted, especially now.

"I think we're past that," Patterson said. "I don't know. We're a week into (cases declining). We'll see. Unless things drastically change, I don't see it going back to that direction, where that would even be part of the discussion."

While the decline in active cases has come at the same time as a decrease in COVID-19 testing, Hornickel said the decrease in testing on campus has been a product of less symptomatic individuals. The Wellness Center has continued to test all students displaying symptoms, he said.

The county, meanwhile, hosted

a community testing event Sept. 14 with the capacity to swab up to 400 residents. Patterson said roughly 225 residents were tested, though he said he wasn't sure of the exact number. He said he expects results back Sept. 17.

As the county continues to report less than 10 new daily COVID-19 cases per day, Patterson said he's thankful for the break that has come in the midst of September. He said the county and University appear to be "turning a corner" in their COVID-19 response. And while Hornickel expressed a similar sense of respite, he's not sure the University is out of the woods, with another nine weeks of classes still to come.

"Sure, personally I'm (relieved)," Hornickel said. "We also know it's not over yet. We have to continue following those mitigation efforts, because we very well could see another spike."

New faculty work through late hiring process



Provost Jaime Hooyman says last-minute hires aren't uncommon at Northwest. Since three of the four adjuncts won't teach until second block starts, they will have plenty of time to prepare for classes.

MADELINE MAPES
News Reporter | @MadelineDMapes

One faculty member sat at her desk looking over all of the assignments and powerpoints she would have to present to her first class in two days. She had just gotten word that she was hired as an adjunct employee for the University and had only two days to prepare to teach a class.

Shelby Trussell was one of four last-minute adjuncts that were approved Sept. 3 by the Board of Regents to teach this fall semester.

Trussell, who's serving as the assistant administrator for business operations with Northwest Athletics, was originally supposed to teach for just the first block of the semester, but will now be teaching all semester.

Trussell was officially hired as an adjunct Aug. 18, leaving her only two days to prepare to take on an Accounting 1 class that started the following Thursday, Aug. 20.

"It was kind of a last-minute situation," Trussell said, as she rolled her chair back away from her desk to social distance and took off her

mask, contemplating the events that had led up to her first day of teaching this semester.

She explained that she did not have any preparations made for the class aside from what she was provided by the University, which was the syllabus and all of the course work for the class.

Trussell was left to go through and modify numerous powerpoints and plan out how she was going to teach the class during the pandemic in a matter of 48 hours.

Trussell does her best to prepare before each class, noting that she had been a graduate assistant while she was attending Northwest as a student and had the opportunity to teach a few accounting classes. These past experiences helped Trussell further prepare to teach this year's accounting 1 class.

"It was a smooth transition," Trussell said.

As a graduate assistant, Trussell gained a mentor. Senior instructor Melinda Tobin was one of Trussell's accounting instructors when Trussell was a student. Tobin helped Trussell prepare to teach her new class by providing advice and answering

any questions Trussell had.

Trussell explained she frequently sent Tobin text messages with questions while trying to prepare within the short time frame she had.

"She came in here the day before I was supposed to teach class ... and just kind of walked me through some things," Trussell said. "She's just been super helpful."

Trussell said the hardest part about starting classes this semester was the lack of time she had to plan. She explained that she is an organized person who likes to plan things in advance, and Trussell did not get the opportunity to do that with her class this semester.

Despite the lack of planning, Trussell said her classes are going very well and looks forward to continuing her work as an instructor.

Provost Jamie Hooyman said the last-minute hiring of the four adjunct faculty is not uncommon. She said since they are second block instructors, the hiring process was actually ahead of schedule.

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Infections might go down, but guard shouldn't

ZANE CULJAT Columnist | @BoomerZane

There has been some relatively encouraging news in recent days when it comes to COVID-19 on a local level. This time last week, the seven-day rolling average of daily positive cases in Nodaway County had dropped by more than half — from 29.43 at the tail end of August to just under 11.71. For the most part, the number of active on-campus cases has been below the 100 mark since Sept. 6.

If one were to take a look at Northwest's COVID-19 tracker, they might say this campus, and the county as a whole, had hit its peak two weeks ago and is now on the decline. Relatively speaking, they'd be right. I'll tell you right now: getting comfortable is not the thing to do.

Now is not the time to take this pandemic-ridden world we live in lightly. Mask wearing seems to be falling by the wayside, especially in areas where mandates aren't in place. Everywhere I go, every errand I've had to run since being released from quarantine, the fewer face coverings I tend to see.

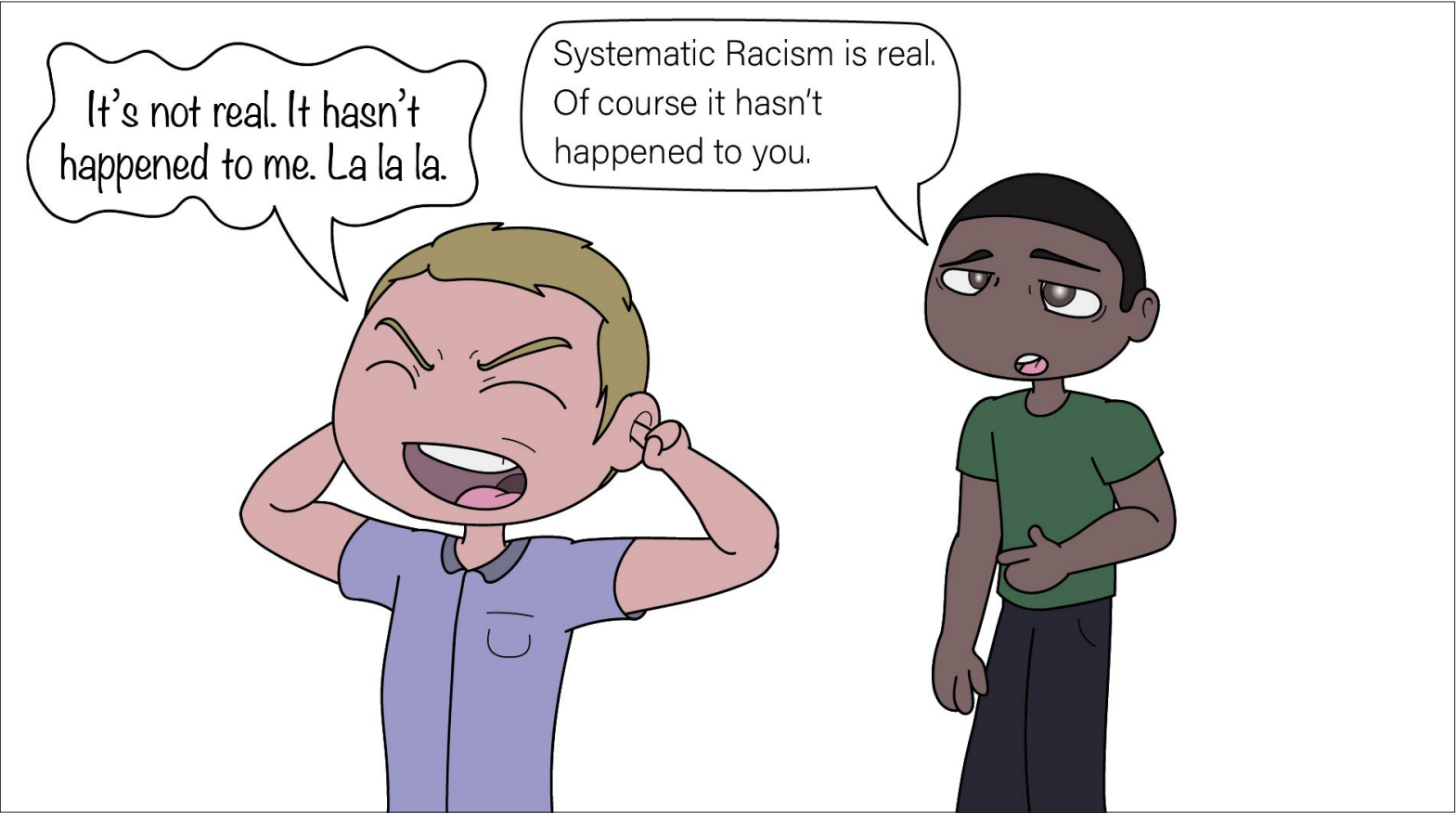
To be frank with you, I'm not that surprised, yet I can't help but be concerned. Even if it's only for five minutes while running inside the convenience store, one layer of defense is still better than nothing. Cotton masks, like the ones Northwest provided back in August, have a droplet transmission rate of less than one-tenth of a percent. It's not perfect, but it's the most effective method we have.

Social distancing is another guideline I've noticed less and less of as time progresses. Sure, waiting in line and/or standing 6 feet apart can be a hindrance, but again, it should remain in everyone's best interest. This isn't like waiting in a drive-thru line at Mickey D's, where you have your car to act as a makeshift bubble to take care of that space. Personally, I've never been a fan of people standing two inches behind me. Especially in the middle of a pandemic, I'm certainly not going to let it fly now. Keep your personal bubble apart from mine, relax a little and we'll be just fine.

As far as going on those outdoor walks or jogs, I'm cool with it — and I'm sure most of your neighbors will be, too — so long as, again, you're leaving ample clearance for those of us just stepping out the front door in a bathrobe to get the morning paper off the driveway. Even if you and I are passing on the sidewalk running from class to class, please do your fellow Bearcat a favor and put your mask on.

Exercising with a tight cotton mask sucks, I get it. As someone who's so out of shape it's ridiculous, getting winded is a million times easier with that thing strapped to your nose and mouth. I hate to say it, but wearing one going down the sidewalk, even during your most intense workouts, is your best protection.

Navigating this pandemic hasn't been easy by any stretch of the imagination. I'm sure 99.9% of Americans would agree. Don't let it get to your head, but all the precautions you are taking now equal progress. We're going in the right direction. I cannot encourage you enough to keep at it. The more we do now, the fewer pieces we'll have to pick up down the road. Continue to do your part, Bearcats, and do it well. An entire community is counting on you.



CHRIS YOUNG | NW MISSOURIAN

OUR VIEW:

Dear white people: We've read your letters to the editor. And we have a few concerns

The opinion section of this newspaper is, in its purest sense, an open forum for the community that the paper serves. More so than any other section of the paper, the opinion section belongs to the readers, and except for the unsigned staff editorial, should stay objective — or at least fair — and allow readers to present their viewpoints.

The paragraph above is taken nearly word for word from the Northwest Missourian's staff manual. As an editorial board, we're committed to providing an open forum for diverse thoughts and ideas — as long as those thoughts and ideas aren't rooted in the dismissing and discounting of an entire race of people.

We've received more letters to the editor in our inbox over the last several weeks than we did the last calendar year, most of them in response to a column we ran almost a full month ago titled, "Being Black in Maryville means never feeling safe." Each response, critique or barely-coherent stream-of-consciousness we've received has been unique, of course, but they've come with a common theme. They center around white people victimizing themselves over the discomfort Black people feel in this community.

Dear white people: we've read your letters. We aren't running them in this newspaper or on this website. We aren't going to lift up voices that are intent only on disputing and drowning out those of our Black students, our Black peers, our Black columnists.

Dear white people: we've read your letters. We know you don't see the racism in this community. You've never had to live through it. And if you keep closing your eyes and plugging your ears when someone who has lived through it decides to share their encounters, you're not going to see it. You're not even trying to.

Dear white people: we've read your letters. And we have more than a few concerns, so we've decided to take this space, in this moment of national and local reckoning, and address some of them in the sincere hope of advancing a conversation that many members of this community are unwilling to hear.

Yes, white privilege exists. It's inherent and systemic and inescapable. It's apparent in police traffic stop rates and in school curriculums. It's so interwoven into American society that it goes unrecognized by those who reap its benefits every day. And it's there, in ignorance,

where white privilege is perhaps the most prevalent and dangerous. Inherently removed from the effects of racism, even well-meaning white people are walking around in delusion, unaware of the dire racial climate they occupy, unable to see the changes that need made.

No, reverse racism does not exist. Perhaps there are people who hate you for being white, maybe even groups of them. But there aren't systems designed to hold you down. There haven't been policies written to exclude you. You don't face now, and have never faced at any point in America's history, any systemic barrier in advancing in society.

And Affirmative Action — a buzzword for several letter-writers and Facebook commenters — was a set of policies enacted to promote equity, not to hurt you. In fact, white students still receive almost 67% of all institutional grants and scholarships awarded, and over 75% of all merit-based grants and scholarships, although white people only make up about 62% of the college student population.

No, there are not Black-exclusive clubs, fraternities or sororities on this campus. The Black Student Union, the Rho Theta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Minority Men's Organization and every other student organization on Northwest's campus is open to every student regardless of race. White people are not excluded from any campus groups based on the color of their skin.

No, our columnist didn't say he thinks people who drive trucks and wear boots are racist. He actually wrote clearly that, "trucks don't, by any means, denote someone's personality." But still, so many respondents and Facebook commenters have latched on to his anecdotal note about some boot-wearing, truck-driving Maryville residents. And in doing so, they may have proved his point.

If your response to our columnist bravely sharing his experiences in Maryville was to make a Facebook comment or pen a letter doubting and discrediting his words, determined to prove to him how accepting this community really is by twisting his words and accusing him of "reverse racism," perhaps you're a part of the problem.

Racism is rarely overt. It's subtle. It's daily. It plays out on a systemic scale too large to comprehend and in microaggressions too small to spot. It's not often written out in black and white, submitted in letter format. But it has been lately.

YOUR VIEW:

Does white privilege exist?

MARYANN JOHNSON
Sophomore
English Education



"For sure. I think inherently just because of history. And then just nowadays, if you're white, you're inherently born with more of a privilege and less of a bias towards you from other people, like you don't get discriminated against."

BRIANNA HEREDIA
Freshman
Digital Media
Visual Imaging



"I do think white privilege exists because I've kind of seen it firsthand. My dad is Venezuelan, and he is much darker than I am, and when we are out in public, he gets treated a lot differently than I do. That's why I believe it exists."

ELISA GREER
Senior
Therapeutic Recreation



"I do think it exists. Just the fact that over time it's been proof that white Americans have an advantage far as having connections to get them far, not saying that, you know, they didn't have the hard work to achieve it, but it's just happening over time that they have more connections to start with. It's just been proven from different work places and other job roles that even if the job isn't big, but it's been to some extent where white privilege has been displayed."

THE STROLLER:

Your Bearcat wants to see more fans in the stands

I hear all this talk about Bearcats supporting one another, about how Bearcats uplift each other. Even those propaganda-stitched masks the University handed out say, "Bearcats Together." But where is this energy when I play intramural softball?

I keep reading tweets from upset football fans lamenting the loss of this season and reading articles in this very newspaper about how athletes are weathering the fall without sports. But sports are still hap-

pening, people. Intramural softball is happening every Monday.

It's sad knowing that college athletes are essentially having to put their lives on hold an extra year as they deal with the effects of COVID-19, knowing they have to keep training for a season that isn't happening. But you know what's more sad than that? The fact that no one is watching me bat clean up for the fifth best co-ed intramural softball team this University has to offer.

I can't stand the thought of hitting another infield triple without bleachers full of fans cheering me on. And how many times do I have to lay out for a routine flyball before people start to take notice? That's hard enough to do playing catcher. I feel like I deserve some recognition.

So far, the only fans in the stand have been my teammates' girlfriends, who, honestly, might just be there to flirt with me. Can't tell.

But, come on, guys. Almost ev-

ery other event and student organization has been moved online. Every other collegiate sport has been canceled. You're dying for live sports, and I'm offering a solution. Our roster is the best kept secret on campus. And playoffs start next week.

The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of The Northwest Missourian.

NORTHWEST MISSOURIAN
THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF MARYVILLE, MISSOURI | NWMISSOURIANNEWS.COM

An Independent Student Newspaper since 1914.
800 University Drive, Wells Hall
Maryville, MO, 64468

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Station manager John Coffey sits in a studio in Wells Hall. Coffey has been a part of the KXCV-KRNW Radio station, based in Wells Hall, since his first year at Northwest.

JOHN COFFEY

Voice of the Bearcats

NATHAN ENGLISH
Reporter | @nathan_3nglish

A transistor radio on the bed of his childhood room. That’s what John Coffey estimates as the beginning of his love for sports broadcasting. That love became a career as the “voice of the Bearcats,” and now Coffey’s love vaulted him into a general manager position and a corner office. It all relates back, however, to that one little radio on his bed late at night.

“I still think there is magic coming out of that little box,” Coffey said.

As a child in the small town of Albany, Missouri, Coffey would regularly listen to Hall of Fame broadcaster Jack Buck call St. Louis Cardinals baseball, even staying up to listen late at night when they were playing on the west coast. Coffey felt as though Buck were speaking directly to him, reminding him of the batting average of the third baseman or describing for him the way the curveball ducked into the strike zone centimeters before smacking into the catcher’s glove.

The fascination would continue to grow for Coffey as he continued to grow. It was there when Coffey was attending a tennis camp at Northwest between his junior and senior year of high school when fellow Albany native, and Coffey’s future boss at KXCV-KRNW Radio, Rodney Harris gave him a tour of the radio station on campus. That tour sealed the deal for Coffey. He wanted to be a Bearcat.

The fascination was there on Feb. 20 when Northwest point guard Trevor Hudgins weaved in between two Missouri Southern defenders and hit a leaner as time expired giving the Bearcats the win and their seventh straight conference title. Coffey’s account of that game-winner would earn him an award from the Missouri Broadcasters Association for best radio play-by-play call. The call would also be labeled as Coffey’s best by in-booth partner Matt Tritten.

“It was like you were watching ESPN classic, but you witnessed it first hand, right now. It was cool to be there and be a part of that,” Tritten said of the call.

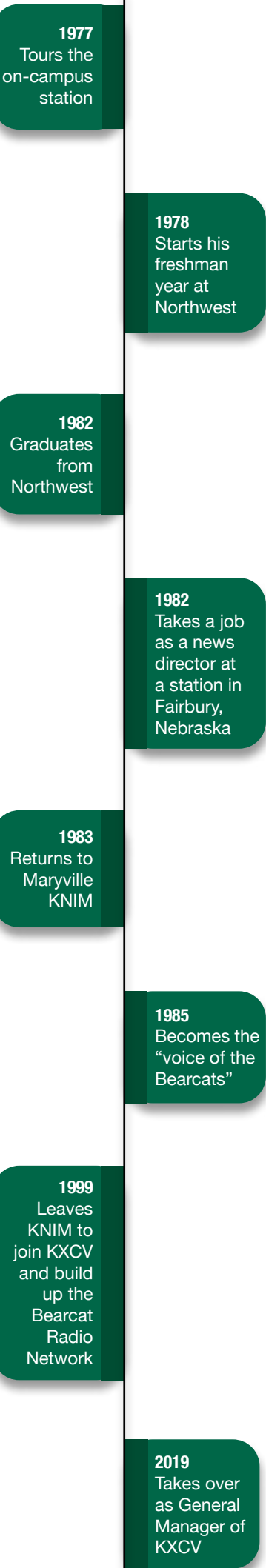
And the fascination is still there now as Coffey arrives at Wells Hall just after 7 a.m. to do his sportscasts in KXCV studio, 15 steps from his relatively new corner office on the third floor. Coffey took over as station manager for KXCV in October 2019, after the passing of Harris, his longtime friend and the man that first gave him a tour of the station many decades ago.

“This wasn’t the way I wanted to get the position at all. I’m just trying to build on what Rodney was doing as general manager,” Coffey said.

Coffey started at KXCV as a student reporter during his undergraduate stint at Northwest from 1978-1982. After that Coffey briefly took a job as the news director for a station in Fairbury, Nebraska, before returning to Maryville at KNIM in 1983.

Before 1985 there was no “voice of the Bearcats.” The job of calling Bearcat games would fall to students and miscellaneous broadcasters before Coffey became the first and only person to hold that title beginning in the ’85 football season. Coffey has been in the booth for

John Coffey’s path



Station manager John Coffey first toured the on-campus station in 1977. The tour was given by previous station manager Rodney Harris.

a combined eight NCAA Division II National Championships — six in football and two in basketball — and 30 conference championships.

“For us on the younger end, if you think about any Bearcat moment, anything that’s been impactful in Northwest Missouri State athletics history at least on the basketball and football side, he’s been right there,” Tritten said.

Coffey continued to call Northwest games at KNIM until 1999 when Ken White from Northwest’s relations department reached out to Coffey about helping build the Bearcat Radio Network. Since Coffey’s arrival, the network has expanded to cover much of Northern Missouri and Southern Iowa as well as parts of Nebraska and Kansas. They have affiliate stations in Kansas City, Missouri, and Shenandoah, Iowa, and an antenna that broadcasts from Chillicothe, Missouri.

Even as the broadcast continued to expand through traditional radio means and via the internet, Coffey still values the personal aspect of radio. He regularly receives emails from his listeners thanking him personally for being in their car, living room or boat with them as they listen to a Bearcat game. Coffey has been told of people on beaches in Australia and boats off the coast of China listening to his even-keeled voice emanating from KXCV.

“The voice out of that box, you are speaking directly to the listener,” Coffey said.

He remembers one time in particular when a fan had reached out to him that really touched him. Coffey was calling a high school tournament at William Jewell that takes place around the holidays. He noticed that one of the regular attendees wasn’t in her normal seat. He later received a letter from her thanking him for calling the games, saying it was one of the things that helped her get through chemotherapy.

“That’s something I always try to keep in mind when we set up to do a game. There are people on the other end, that you don’t know what their situation is; this could be the high point of their day,” Coffey said.

Even though his listeners never see his face, Coffey is one of the most visible figures for Northwest Athletics. He gets approached almost every time he goes out in Maryville by fans and he says the run-ins are always pleasant and welcomed.

That’s one of the things he values about KXCV and Northwest as a whole: the familial aspect. At larger schools, you don’t get the opportunity to be as close to those in the community, Coffey said. He particularly values the relationships that he is able to build with students.

“It’s fun to see that he not only takes in building that interaction but also teaching us the skills you need for broadcasting and what it takes to be a successful broadcaster,” said Keegan Cooper, a student manager at KXCV, who worked directly with Coffey as an intern over the summer.

KXCV is largely built on student participation with student reporters, like Coffey formerly was, being an integral part of how the station runs. For some student reporters, the “voice of the

Bearcats” has a celebrity effect, Cooper said.

“He’s that guy, but he’s still personable,” Cooper said. “He’s so laid back and willing to help students.”

A good-sized portion of current KXCV staff first came through the program as students, including Tritten, who maintained a steady professional relationship with Coffey as he was working at KQ2 in St. Joseph, Missouri. That led to his return Northwest six years after graduating.

Coffey commonly refers to KXCV alumni as a family. A network that spans just mere feet from his office to radio stations across the country. Coffey attributes the same familial aspect to the MIAA as a whole.

He has been around many of the same people at rival schools for years. And while the rivalry between Northwest and its in-conference opponents may be bitter on the field or court, off of it, Coffey sees more unity than animosity.

“We are all in this together, doing the same thing, and we try and help each other out,” Coffey said.

That’s part of the reason he enjoys road trips to other schools although the ice cream stops might be just as big a reason. Tritten described Coffey as an ice cream fanatic. His favorite flavor is vanilla due to its versatility. His level of love for ice cream is prevalent enough that Don Weast, sports information director at Emporia State, makes sure the freezer is stocked every time Coffey rolls into town.

The detours at locally owned ice cream shops are one of the things that Coffey has not been able to do this year because of the coronavirus wreaking havoc on the 2020 football season and likely the 2020 basketball season.

Coffey stills has the recurring nightmare that he says is common with all broadcasters, that he is late to a game, but this year it feels different. Long nights are spent watching streaming services rather than game film, and KXCV now airs Bearcat Classics in place of live sports for the foreseeable future.

Coffey still manages to keep himself occupied between his new duties as general manager of the station and his time spent on the tennis court. Coffey, who walked on to the Northwest tennis team while he was an undergraduate, still tries to play regularly his girlfriend Amy Adkins to Northwest tennis coach Mark Rosewell. He doesn’t play Tritten anymore though.

“I’m not sure if he’s scared that I’m gonna beat him,” Tritten said jokingly, as to why Coffey won’t play him anymore.

“I don’t know why he wants to keep playing because he hasn’t won a game off me yet,” Coffey said.

As much as Coffey enjoys his free time, he longs to return to the booth and call Bearcat games again and is hopeful that basketball will proceed as normal. For now, he will have to settle for reminiscing about past calls and players, maintaining his undefeated streak against Tritten in tennis and expanding the KXCV family.

In these unsure times, one thing is certain, Coffey’s love for the magic that comes out of that little box will continue even if he isn’t calling games.

GAMING

CONTINUED FROM A10

Instead, Bennett said, it started with Nintendo’s Super Smash Bros., which made its debut on the market in January 1999. The Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter series were among the other games that Bennett mentioned.

Mehl joined Northwest as an employee in May 2019. And, in some ways, he became the second driving force behind the push to get an esports program at Northwest.

Mehl’s position, coupled with his eagerness towards the idea of an esports program, allowed the Fighting Gaming Club to be re-branded in an attempt to move the club to an affiliated club sport through Northwest.

It wasn’t Mehl’s initial intention to become affiliated with esports, although he said it was frequently mentioned in his interview. He wasn’t fully aware of all of the specifics that accompanied the territory until attending esports conventions, he said.

Two months after being hired, Mehl was directed to make a push in the esports department. A little more than a year later, he is a part of the group that has the program with its own space on campus.

“The entire process has just been really interesting to see,” Mehl said. “Just how we had to find the dedicated space, what all goes in technology wise — all that — it’s just really crazy that a lot of people don’t know.”

Bennett’s and Siebert’s efforts were needed due to an absence of esports in Northwest Athletics. There were efforts to get the esports program as a direct affiliate with Athletics, Bennett said. And, Bennett said, Northwest Director of Athletics Andy Peterson is a big advocate for esports.

Bennett mentioned that Peterson used his position to try and make his own push for esports to become a part of Athletics, in which Northwest President John Jasinski was intrigued. However, Bennett said the biggest obstacle was something out of the control of anybody at Northwest.

“The reason is kinda simple, esports is not regulated by the (NCAA). Like, that’s not a thing,” Bennett said. “Therefore, it really can’t be under the Athletics umbrella very easily, at least not at a state school. ... With regulations changing — I honestly go back and forth whether it will ever get under Athletics, I don’t know — I think it’ll be partnered with Athletics, but it’s too hard to regulate.”

Under Athletics, the program would have the opportunity to compete for NCAA-recognized national championships. With that, there’d be a set scholarship budget for the program as well to try and recruit talent.

The bright side to that is the program can participate in whichever events it pleases. And it doesn’t have to put forth efforts into recruiting to compete.

“Since no esports program in the nation is, like, ‘This is varsity and these are the rules for varsity,’ I can find three kids that want to play Rocket League — that can be the varsity team,” Bennett said. “It’s that simple. So, it doesn’t need that athletics drive. But, I very much appreciate the support from Athletics and Andy Peterson.”

For Bennett and Mehl, it isn’t about a personal accomplishment as much as it is implementing a program they believe is needed in today’s generation. And, they said, it’s most importantly about the opportunity that it’s providing for people that perhaps wouldn’t have the same chances without it.

“Seeing that passion and dedication, and seeing these students connect to each other that might not have found each other otherwise is awesome,” Bennett said. “Then having those students, who might not know each other, go and compete in something — that’s amazing and super cool.”

The esports lab is being put to the test with weekly events prior to its official opening, such as an EA Sports Madden NFL 21 tournament Sept. 15 and another undecided gaming tournament Sept. 22.

And so a little over two years into the process, the Northwest esports club is expected to have a grand opening for the esports lab in early October. With it accompanies a one credit hour class that will take place during the second-block with the intent of branching out to more students.

Panthers hope to tame Wildkats

MORGAN GUYER
Missourian Reporter I @NWMSports

In the early stages of the 2019 season, the Pattonsburg Panthers defeated the North Andrew Cardinals in a 68-62 shootout.

Less than a year later, the Panthers faced a much different result, falling to the Cardinals 74-38 Sept. 11 at Pattonsburg Stadium.

And after dropping to 2-1 on the season, Pattonsburg moves onto it’s Week 4 matchup against the King City Wildkats. Coach Scott Cavin knows how important it is to flush a loss.

“We just have to have a short memory, and guys are going to have to step up and play physical,” Cavin said. “We have to limit turnovers and just improve on offense to take care of it.”

The Panthers are led by first-year quarterback Zane Reed, who came into this season with big

shoes to fill following the graduation of Steven Willhite. Willhite had one of the best individual seasons in the country last year, finishing with 5,424 yards passing and 112 total touchdowns.

The Panthers run a spread offense, which is rare in a run-heavy sport like 8-man football. Cavin still has confidence in his younger quarterback, despite showing some growing pains in Week 3.

“I’ve trusted him from the start,” Cavin said. “The best way to get him comfortable is to let him throw it around.”

Reed finished with 427 yards passing and five touchdowns against the Cardinals but struggled with turning the ball over as he threw three interceptions. He has now totaled 1,197 yards passing and 19 touchdowns throughout the first three games.

The Panthers also had to deal with losing multiple key receivers

from last season and have relied on new players to step up. One of those is sophomore wideout Brody Langfitt, who had a breakout game against North Andrew in which he caught 25 passes for 291 yards and five touchdowns. The 25 receptions in a game is a new state record, according to MSHSAA.

“We have athletes we want to get the ball to, and we are gonna continue to do that with Brody and other guys,” Cavin said. “We just want to keep getting him the ball in space and let him work.”

The Wildkats enter the matchup at 1-2 following a 44-20 loss to Stanberry Sept. 11. Their offense is led by running back Parker Muff, who has 702 yards rushing and nine touchdowns this season. Panthers’ Defensive Coordinator J.W. Brandt expects his defense to have its hands full trying to contain the elusive back.

“He is a good player,” Brandt

said. “We’ll prepare for him by making sure we know our assignments and emphasizing team defense.”

The Panthers will need a better performance from their defense against King City after giving up 479 total yards of offense to the Cardinals. Pattonsburg will be looking for a big game from Langfitt and defensive back Cameron Jones. Langfitt has three interceptions on the season and Jones has added 14 tackles, along with an interception of his own.

After an undefeated regular season in 2019, the Panthers are disappointed in losing that goal this year. Now, they will need to finish strong to be able to complete their playoff aspirations.

“As a team, we just need to execute better,” Brandt said. “We are confident in our kids and what we are doing, but we just have to keep improving.”

Pandemic puts a stop to Family Weekend

DALTON TRUSSELL
Missourian Reporter I @NWMSports

A long lasting tradition at Northwest is Family Weekend. This year’s Family Weekend was canceled due to COVID-19.

Usually on Family Weekend, there is a football game and activities to do for the students’ families. This year, with COVID-19, all MIAA fall sports were suspended, effectively leading to the cancellation of Family Weekend events.

“Yes, it’s disappointing, but I get it,” Northwest Director of Athletics Andy Peterson said. “When you have a home football game, it brings a lot of people to the area. It’s disappointing, but bringing that many people together exposes people to everything going on right now.”

Family Weekend brings lots of people to campus and, traditionally, creates a buzz around Maryville

in anticipation for the weekend’s events. Despite being canceled this year, students and their families are hoping to see the festivities return in 2021.

“Campus is buzzing; it is usually the first home game of the year,” Peterson said. “The students get to show their parents what their college experiences are like. It’s more about visiting and catching up. It’s family; it’s in the name.”

Along with being a big deal to students and the athletic department, it is important to the Northwest football players as well. It has a bigger meaning behind it for them and the coaching staff than just a normal game.

To the football program, Family Weekend is also a weekend to honor the late coach Scott Bostwick. Bostwick was the defensive coordinator at Northwest for 17 years. He was officially named head coach

in December 2010.

As a surprise for the players, Bostwick was in the works of having black uniforms made for the 2011 season. After finally getting the OK to do so, the coaching staff kept it a secret from the players.

Bostwick died in June before ever getting to coach in his first game at the helm of the program. Now, the Bearcats remember him every Family Weekend by wearing all black uniforms.

“It is tradition,” Peterson said. “It has been around for a long time, and it speaks to how much it means to the football program and the school as well.”

This is a chance for the players to play in front of their parents and showcase what they are doing and have learned throughout their entire offseason.

“The players love this weekend and love the tradition,” North-

west football linebacker Jackson Barnes said. “I definitely think this tradition should continue forever. Northwest as a community is a big deal; family is a huge tradition in this community. It should continue because of how big of a deal it is to everyone in this community.”

“The atmosphere is just different on Family Weekend,” Barnes said. “We aren’t just playing for ourselves out there that weekend, we are playing for the community, for our parents, for our family.”

The football game on Family Weekend historically is one that brings in a larger group of fans than most other games. And without a draw to campus for families, some people won’t get the opportunity to see relatives.

“As a university, we have to realize it is more than just sports that matter,” Peterson said. “So, we understand it.”



JON WALKER | NW MISSOURIAN

Maryville football’s defense swarms to a loose ball in the ’62-7 win against MEC rival Chillicothe Sept. 11 at the ’Hound Pound. The Spoofhounds head into Week 4 with the hopes of being 2-0 in the MEC. Standing in their way of doing so is St. Pius X, which is led by first-year coach Anthony Simone Jr.

JERSEY

CONTINUED FROM A10

“His team’s important to him,” Maryville coach Matt Webb said about Walker after the Spoofhounds’ 62-7 dismantling of Chillicothe. “He just had surgery yesterday, and 24 hours later, he’s here with his teammates. Again, it’s just a good example of what type of young man he is and the character he has.”

Perhaps the biggest honor of the night’s festivities didn’t present itself in the form of cheers from the crowd, an escort from his family or even hearing his name and future goals over the sound system at the ’Hound Pound.

But instead, Walker was honored by senior running back Connor Weiss exchanging his usual No. 4 jersey for Walker’s No. 2.

“Seeing him in that wheelchair was just really depressing,” Weiss said. “He’s our brother. We’ve played with him since third grade. It’s terrible to see him not be able to play. So, it’s an honor to be able to wear his jersey and play in honor of him.”

The decision itself wasn’t one that was made in advance. Instead, it was something that Weiss talked to the coaches about moments before going to the field for warmups.

“We talked about it before the game; I thought it was a great idea,” Webb said of Weiss’s choice.

“These guys love each other. That’s just an example of, you know — I don’t know if it’s like that everywhere, but it sure is special here.”

Weiss didn’t play in Maryville’s first two games of the season after sitting out due to COVID-19-related issues, making the game against the Hornets his season debut. And as the Spoofhounds faced a 7-point deficit late in the first quarter, Weiss found the end zone from 21 yards out. A failed extra-point attempt kept Chillicothe ahead by a point.

Two drives later, after senior running back Trey Houchin gave Maryville the lead, Weiss scored again. The second of his scores in the game came via a 27-yard rush through the thick of the Hornets’ defense, one that gave Maryville a 20-7 lead with 2:23 left in the second quarter.

The nightcap of Weiss’s hat trick occurred when junior quarterback Connor Drake, Walker’s replacement, connected with the running back for a 23-yard catch-and-run score.

Weiss’s debut, and seemingly effective tribute to Walker, ended with the senior tallying 138 yards rushing with two touchdowns on eight carries, along with the receiving touchdown.

“It feels great to actually get it done,” Weiss said about the victory against the Hornets. “It’s an honor to be able to represent (Walker) in such a fashionable way.”

“He’s a great athlete, and a better friend, so I wasn’t shocked when he had the game he had,” Walker said about Weiss. “But I was proud of him coming out for his debut and putting up the numbers he did.”

Walker, despite being the obvious focus and motivation of Weiss’s action to exchange jerseys, was clueless of the gesture.

“I had no idea about any of the jersey deal,” Walker said. “But when I wheeled up and saw No. 2 out there, it hit me pretty hard and showed how good of friends we all are. But it just felt good.”

Now, with Walker likely out for the season, Weiss and the senior class is down a member that was there since the beginning. The chances of Weiss strapping up the pads alongside Walker again are slim.

Weiss’s decision was one that honored a teammate, as well as someone who has played a significant role in his life for most of it.

“It means a lot to me,” Weiss said about his tribute to Walker. “Ben’s been one of my day-ones since way back in the day. There’s a lot of love.”

“It’s pretty emotional. But it’s great — just an honor. It’s amazing, especially when you get to ball out for your brother.”

MEC

CONTINUED FROM A10

The focus on blocking schemes will go much smoother this week than previous weeks, as the Spoofhounds return to full power on the offensive line. The return of junior offensive lineman Blake Casteel is capable of giving the line power it needs to get a good push and returns players to their original positions.

Casteel and the offensive line’s presence was felt against Chillicothe as the Spoofhounds tallied 358 yards rushing. Senior running backs Weiss and Trey Houchinare looking to carry their combined five touchdown performance into the matchup with Pius.

“We really executed well upfront,” Webb said about the offense in the Week 3 matchup. “It showed how good our backs could be when we can have fresh legs and rotate as many guys as we can.”

Weiss was also thankful for the offensive lines’ effort.

“The line is going to get their blocks, because they’ve been doing that every time,” Weiss said. “They’re doing a great job at it.”

While St. Pius is bringing in a new coaching staff, defensive scheme and expectations into the matchup with Maryville, Webb and his team are ready.

“This is just another trip to St. Pius,” Webb said. “We’ll be excited for it.”



The Maryville cross country team runs on the trail parrallel to the school Sept. 15. Sometimes, the team runs rounds at practices. Other times, the Spoofohounds run long distance for an hour.

Cross country battles nuances of races

CORBIN SMITH
Sports Reporter | @curly_corbs

Maryville cross country made a two-hour trip to Raymore-Peculiar High School to compete in a rather unique version of the Raymore-Peculiar Cross Country Invitational Sept. 12.

Battling against a couple of different factors, coach Rodney Bade said he was pleased with his team’s performance.

“It was a pretty good meet for us,” Bade said. “It was kind of a different style of meet — they did a wave start, so we were in a wave with four other schools.”

In cross country, a wave start is when 10 or less runners start 30 seconds before the next group of 10, and so on until all runners have started.

This was done to lessen the chances of runners contracting COVID-19. However, it created a different atmosphere than expected for



a normal meet.

The wave format wasn’t the only restriction given to runners. Like most high school sporting events this season, two spectators per athlete were allowed entry, and each race was limited to roughly 50 athletes.

“This was the first time we’ve seen that,” Bade said. “The meet didn’t have that big, giant carnival-like feel. You didn’t get 150-200 kids storming down a starting straight into the first turn — you miss that.”

Bade said he thinks that the time trial-esque ambiance affected how the ’Hounds competed, but he tried to prepare them to run alone during a race. The effect of this type of racing varies for each individual runner.

For Maryville’s top two runners, Bade said they weren’t affected by the distance separating the athletes. However, for No. 3 runner junior Cale Sterling, Bade noticed his race was impacted by such gaps.

“Our third runner was totally out by himself for a long time,” Bade said. “Once he lost contact with that group in front of him, it was really mentally difficult to try and claw that back. The time of day we raced, all of a sudden the sun came out and it got crazy, so that didn’t help us either.”

Pushing onward from their second outing this season, Bade hasn’t changed his plan of attack with the Spoofohounds. Bade understands this season isn’t guaranteed, at least this semester, which ushers his thought of getting his runners to run well in the event that this season meets the same fate as its spring counterpart.

On Sept. 19, Bade will take senior Garrett Dumke, junior Jag Galapin, junior Cale Sterling and senior Jake Walker to Pella, Iowa, to compete in the Heartland Classic.

“We were going to go to Joplin at Missouri Southern — crazy fast course down there,” Bade said. “They had to cancel that, so I was scrambling to try and find something.”

Originally, the team was scheduled to run in the Missouri South-

ern High School Stampede Sept. 19, but the meet was canceled due to the large registration of athletes, surpassing the allowable gathering limit in the city of Joplin, Missouri.

Bade said the Pella meet will be smaller than he’s used to attending, but it will host the largest field the team has seen this year.

His plan for the top four this meet is to run fast with the thought of no state championships lingering in the background.

“I can try and get us to peak mid-season — this week,” Bade said. “If we lose the rest of this season, hopefully we can at least throw down a decent time. I would’ve liked to go down to Joplin. That was the goal, to race fast mid-season in case we don’t get the rest of it.”

Bade said he tries not to give the thought of a postponed postseason any light of day, but the cancellation of more meets feeds his anxiety. He is advising his athletes to do their part in limiting the spread of COVID-19 with the hope of being able to finish out the season.

UP NEXT

MHS @ Heartland Classic
Sept. 19
Pella, Iowa

“I try to talk to them about keeping their circle of influence fairly small,” Bade said. “Some of the runners are social butterflies. You can’t control who they hang out with or what they do on the weekend. I guess I try to make them a little more aware of that, but I don’t know how well that is sinking in.”

The weight of this season almost falls into the hands of the athletes, and Bade said he can’t do anything except give the team the rest they need.

“I can’t do anything about the cancellations,” Bade said. “Maybe the season goes on; but if we get to the middle of October and all of a sudden two of our runners are quarantined, the freshmen aren’t ready to be No. 4 and 5. If we lose one to quarantine, we’re not moving on as a team. That’s got me pretty anxious.”

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Reporter, athlete balances between the two

CORBIN SMITH
Sports Reporter
@curly_corbs



For me, doing what I love means I can't talk about what I love.

As you can probably guess, I'm a sports reporter for the Northwest Missourian. What you might not know, is that I'm also a proud member of Northwest track and field. This makes my on-campus job a little tricky.

Think about this for a second. You wake up, ready for a full day of classes, and after school is done, you head to possibly one of the hardest workouts you'll ever encounter. Now add research, interviewing and writing on top of the homework that's already piled on your desk at home. Welcome to my day as a sports-reporting student-athlete.

The title is a mouth full, and if I said my weeks aren't synonymous, I would be lying to you.

I'm bearing a 16-credit course load this semester, writing for The Missourian and pushing my body every day on the track and in the weight room. When I really think about it, my normal days never have an open time slot.

After classes get done for the day, I return home for a quick snack and scurry to finish all I can before I bolt to practice. Following practice, I have to get home and refuel my utterly exhausted cells and transition to my next objective.

Which brings me to what I'm doing now, writing articles. Honestly, most days I don't stress over having a story assignment because I enjoy doing this so much. However, sometimes it's stressful to scrounge for player interviews and muster compelling content when I have schoolwork and athletics to balance. To make time scarcer, I give a little extra time to work out all of the narrative kinks so readers can float through my stories rather than trek through linguistic deserts.

Even if it seems like I'm complaining about juggling school, track and sports reporting, I wouldn't change my situation. I know that I signed up for this, and I'm beyond grateful that I have these opportunities. Although, I do have to say writing about sports while playing a sport is strange.

For example, I interviewed the cross country coach at Maryville High School and he talked about stride patterns, pacing and all the quirks of running. He was quick to dismiss the terms, and in-depth analysis, because they're not something a normal person would understand.

However, I've grown up around track and field my whole life, and I've learned a lot about how runners should progress and the techniques that make runners faster. To have to sit back and act like I can't have an in-depth conversation about running — it's difficult.

It's also difficult to put away my athlete persona. For once, I'm not supposed to be the athlete in this situation. I'm strictly the reporter on the outside of the sports world looking in.

Again, it's strange. I often wonder whether the athletes I interview know that I, too, go through physical hell in the name of competition. I often wonder whether knowing I'm an athlete would improve our conversations or prove insignificant in the quality of my interviews.

Here's another thing: I can't even write about what I know the best. Northwest track and field is off-limits for me. Rightfully so, conflict of interest hinders my ability to illustrate an unbiased report of their accomplishments or setbacks.

Personally, I think I could cover the team with great detail because I live and breathe it each day I come to campus. I really have to rein myself in when my colleagues cover Northwest track and field because I constantly desire giving them a complete rundown on how we feel before, during and after practices or meets.

FULL STORY ONLINE:
NWMISSOURI NEWS.COM



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
Maryville volleyball senior Jordyn Suchan (4) listens during a team huddle against Benton Aug. 31 at the Hound Pound. Suchan has recently been in quarantine, along with sophomore teammate Rylee Vierthaler. Suchan is expected to join the team the week starting Sept. 21, while Vierthaler is now active.

'Hound to make season debut

TANNER SMITH
Sports Reporter | @t_smit02

Maryville volleyball is sitting at an undefeated record of 6-0 despite missing two key starters who were in quarantine after being in close contact with COVID-19 patients.



The Spoofhounds head into this week with their undefeated record after picking up their first MEC win. Sophomore middle hitter Rylee Vierthaler was the first on the team to be quarantined. She is now back this week ready to compete after missing five games at the beginning of the season. Senior outside hitter Jordyn Suchan is still out due to quarantine this week.

The girls have been able to keep in contact with each other via FaceTime and other social media platforms. They have also been able to keep up on film and how the team is performing.

"The girls would FaceTime Rylee and Jordyn while running out onto the court which is special," Maryville coach Miranda Mizera said. "We have all been able to stay connected, and the girls have been

able to watch films and stream the games from home."

Doing workouts at home and school have been different but it still is a chance to get better, Suchan said. The girls have been preparing for their return to the court while stuck at home.

"I know they have been getting their touches in at home with the ball," Mizera said. "Our team has been strong in all aspects of the game this season, and they will fit back in the rotation just fine."

Since Vierthaler and Suchan were both starters coming into the season, the rest of the team has been forced to learn to adapt and fill those roles. It has been shown throughout the season that there is really not a consistent starting rotation.

"I do not look at it the way everyone is looking at it," Mizera said. "Our team has so much depth and dedication to be great that no matter who starts I am confident in the ability of these girls."

With one week left in her quarantine, Suchan has dealt with not being able to go to classes nor practice and games.

"I am always used to being out

and about so this has been pretty boring," Suchan said. "As it being my senior year I feel like I am missing out on playing with my team, seeing my friends and going to school."

Maryville High School has allowed for Suchan and Vierthaler to access their class work online, and Mizera has been able to give them training ideas for being at home.

"I have been getting my touches

with a volleyball against the house and have been getting my school work done online," Suchan said. "I am just trying to stay on top of things so I do not get behind."

With Vierthaler heading back to the team this week, and Suchan preparing to be back the following week, the Spoofhounds head into this week with a home match-up against Lafayette at 7 p.m. Sept. 17 at the 'Hound Pound.

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Maryville football's senior defensive back Matt Goodridge makes a tackle on the first play of the game in the Spoofhounds' 62-7 win against Chillicothe Sept. 11 at the 'Hound Pound.



Maryville football senior running back Connor Weiss honored senior quarterback Ben Walker, who is sidelined indefinitely due to a leg injury, by wearing his No. 2 jersey. Weiss tallied 138 yards rushing and two touchdowns in the Spoofhounds' 62-7 win over Chillicothe Sept. 11 at the 'Hound Pound.

MHS player dedicates Senior Night to QB

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

Prior to Maryville football's Week 3 game against Chillicothe Sept. 11, the program honored 14 seniors who are competing in their final season as a Spoofhound. Only one of them was honored while in a wheelchair. Ben Walker came into the 2020 season expected to be the quarterback primed to lead Maryville's offense for the third consecutive year.



During the first half of Maryville's season opener against Blair Oaks, Walker suffered a leg injury that left his status for the remainder of the season hanging in the balance. On the morning of Sept. 10, Walker underwent surgery to repair a torn ACL. The next day, he was in attendance to wheel his way across the audience he played in front of for the three seasons prior.

SEE JERSEY | A7

Maryville aims for 2-0 start in MEC

CALVIN SILVERS
Sports Reporter | @CalvinSilvers

After a 51-8 loss in its Week 1 matchup against Blair Oaks, Maryville football heads into Week 4 on a two-game winning streak, including an unblemished 1-0 Midland Empire Conference record. An onslaught of 62 unanswered points gave the Spoofhounds (2-1) a 62-7 victory against conference rival Chillicothe (0-3) Sept. 11. The 'Hounds now turn their attention to their next opponent, the St. Pius X Warriors (3-0). Maryville has had the home-field advantage the past two games but will now have to travel for the first time since Week 1. Last year during this time, the Spoofhounds were coming off a two-game road stretch, instead of preparing for one. "The way the schedule flips, the guys know we'll be on the road for the better part of the season until districts get here," Maryville coach Matt Webb said. "This is a really tight-knit team, and when you go on the road, those are memories you make. Going on the road won't be an issue at all." Like last season, Maryville finds



itself 2-1 heading into Week 4, but senior running back Connor Weiss believes this is where the ball really gets rolling. "Each year that we've been in and out, we've always been working as a team," Weiss said. "We create this brotherhood, and it really starts to come together mid-season when we get going." The Spoofhounds have had continuous success against the Warriors since 2010, with a spotless 15-0 record, outscoring Pius with a combined score of 711-113. Those 15 games included a 62-6 thrashing against St. Pius X a season ago. However, the Warriors' 25-year coach Rick Beyers was relieved of his duties by the school administration after last season following a 3-7 campaign in 2019. Webb knew the impact Beyers had on his team throughout the years. "Rick Beyers is in the hall of fame for a reason. Not only is he an excellent football coach, but he's as high as a character person you can find in this business," Webb said. "It'll be a different feeling, but it'll be a normal football game beyond that." Beyers's replacement is Anthony Simone Jr., who has the Warriors sitting at 3-0, a position Pius hasn't been in for more than 10 years. Simone Jr. brings in a new coaching staff to Pius, but he is keeping a similar offensive scheme. The Spoofhounds are preparing for a pro-style offense, in which they will see multiple formations with a lot of shifts and motions. The Warrior offense has seemed to have found a groove as they've scored more than 40 points in two of their three games this season. Last year, Pius scored more than 40 points once.

UP NEXT

Maryville @ St. Pius X
7 p.m. Sept. 18
Kansas City, Missouri

"They're 3-0. They got a lot of confidence offensively, and they should," Webb said. "They got some really good players and a really difficult scheme to defend. We'll need to go out there and execute and tackle well. We have to play our style of defense." The Spoofhounds' style of defense had trouble the first two weeks of the season, allowing a combined 91 points. After returning nine players from COVID-19 protocols, the defense returned to full power and showed as Maryville held Chillicothe to 7 points. On defense, the Warriors are highly sound. They have not allowed a team to put up more than 25 points against them all season. St. Pius X had trouble stopping the Spoofhounds' run-based offense in past seasons, but a new defensive scheme from the Warriors is looking to put a hold on the 'Hounds' run game. "We're just focusing on the defensive alignments and how they differ from Chillicothe's," Webb said. "We're going through our blocking schemes; that's kind of the focus moving onto this week." The Warriors will look to continue to hold another opponent under 25 points, but Maryville will be a challenge. In the past two matchups, the Spoofhounds put up 42 against Harrisonville and 62 against Chillicothe for a combined total of 104 points.

SEE MEC | A7



Northwest students Nate Ambrust and Lunden Taylor play each other in an EA Sports Madden NFL 21 tournament Sept. 15. The esports lab, along with a one credit hour class, is expected to debut to Northwest in early October.

Esports set to debut lab, class after years working with campus

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

In 2017, after two years working as the coordinator of leadership and development for Residential Life at Northwest, Paul Bennett was adamant about a few things in life. Namely, his wife, dog and love for video games. In an attempt to share his admiration for video games with students at Northwest, Bennett had one aspiration. "One way or another, we're gonna have esports here in a year or two," Bennett said his thought process was in 2017.



As of this semester, on the third floor of the J.W. Jones Student Union, there is an esports lab for the new program that Bennett, alongside Coordinator of Sports Clubs and Competitive Sports for Campus Recreation Jordan Mehl, has had in the works for years. It's a foundation that was laid by Bennett's initiation of the Fighting Gaming Club, in which he was aided by Northwest alumnus Collin Siebert. The club didn't start with Fortnite, Call of Duty, or really any of the other most popular games of today's current generation of consoles.

SEE GAMING | A7